(a)   dividing an image to be compressed into a plurality of image blocks;

(b)   carrying out a two-dimensional block transform on each block to produce a corresponding plurality of coefficient blocks;

(c)   bitwise digitizing the coefficients within each coefficient block to define a plurality of bit planes for each coefficient block;

(d)   defining a group of one or more consecutive bit planes starting with the most significant bit plane;

(e)   selecting those coefficients which first become significant within the group;

(f)   flagging the said selected coefficients;

(g)   transmitting information representative of the positions of the said selected coefficients[;] and transmitting the bits within the group of the said coefficients; and,

(h)   repeating steps (d) to (g) one or more times, with each new group starting with the most significant bit plane not previously dealt with[;] and, at each repeated pass, also transmitting the bits within the current group of those coefficients which were previously flagged on an earlier pass.

In Claim 2, line 22, after "which," please insert -- step --.

In Claim 3, line 25, after "which," please insert -- step --.

In Claim 4, line 2, after "as claimed in," delete "any one of Claims 1 to 3" and insert -- Claim 1 --.

In Claim 5, line 5, after "as claimed in," delete "any one of Claims 1 to 3" and insert -- Claim 1 --.

In Claim 6, line 8, after "as claimed in," delete "any one of Claims 1 to 3" and insert -- Claim 1 --.

In Claim 7, line 11, after "as claimed in," delete "any one of the preceding claims" and insert -- Claim 1 further --; after "at," please insert -- step --.

In Claim 9, line 19, after "Claim 7," please delete "Claim 8."

In Claim 10, line 22, after "as claimed in," delete "any one of Claims 7 to 9" and insert -- Claim 7 --.

In Claim 11, line 25, after "as claimed in," delete "any one of Claims 7 to 10" and insert -- Claim 7 --.

In Claim 14, line 8, after "as claimed in," delete "any one of Claims 7 to 13" and insert --
Claim 7 --.

15. (Amended) A method as claimed in [Claim 9 when dependent upon Claim 8] Claim 1 in which the binary mask defines the positions of the selected coefficients within each coefficient block in JPEG zig-zag order, the binary mask is associated with a mask length code to define the mask end point, and the mask length code defines the mask end point zig-zag address.

16. (Amended) A method as claimed in [Claim 9 when dependent upon] Claim 1 in which the binary mask defines the positions of the selected coefficients within each coefficient block in JPEG zig-zag order, the binary mask is associated with a mask length code to define the mask end point, and the mask length code defines the Manhattan distance from a DC term to the mask end point.

17. (Amended) A coder for encoding images, comprising the steps of:

(a)   means for dividing an image to be compressed into a plurality of image blocks;

(b)   means for carrying out a two-dimensional block transform on each block to produce a corresponding plurality of coefficient blocks;

(c)   means for bitwise digitizing the coefficients within each coefficient block to define a plurality of bit planes for each coefficient block;

(d)   means for defining a group of one or more consecutive bit planes starting with the most significant bit plane;

(e)   means for selecting those coefficients which first become significant within the group;

(f)   means for flagging the said selected coefficients;

(g)   means for transmitting information representative of the positions of the said selected coefficients[,] and for transmitting the bits within the group of the said coefficients; and,

(h)   means for repeating steps (d) to (g) one or more times, with each new group starting with the most significant bit plane not previously dealt with[;], and means for transmitting, at each repeated pass, the bits within the current group of those coefficients which were previously flagged on an earlier pass.

In Claim 19, line 18, delete "synchronised," and insert -- synchronized --.

Please cancel Claim 20.

21. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any one of Claims 1 to 16] Claim 1 further including the step of [transmission of] transmitting information representative of a binary off-mask for defining the positions of coefficients whose bits are no longer required to be sent.

[Please add the following Claim 22:]

-- 22. A video coder/decoder comprising a coder and an associated decoder,

(1) the coder encoding images and comprising the steps of:

(a) means for dividing an image to be compressed into a plurality of image blocks;

(b) means for carrying out a two-dimensional block transform on each block to produce a corresponding plurality of coefficient blocks;

(c) means for bitwise digitizing the coefficients with each coefficient block to define a plurality of bit planes for each coefficient block;

(d) means for defining a group of one or more consecutive bit planes starting with the most significant bit plane;

(e) means for selecting those coefficients which first become significant within the group;

(f) means for flagging the said selected coefficients;

(g) means for transmitting information representative of the positions of the said selected coefficients and for transmitting the bits within the group of the said coefficients; and,

(h) means for repeating steps (d) to (g) one or more times, with each new group starting with the most significant bit plane not previously dealt with, and means for transmitting, at each repeated pass, the bits within the current group of those coefficients which were previously flagged on an earlier pass,

(2) the decoder being arranged to maintain a running record, as transmission between the coder and the decoder proceeds, of the coefficients which are currently significant.--

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests that this Amendment be entered and examined. The Headings have been added and spelling changes have been made to conform the Application to United States format.